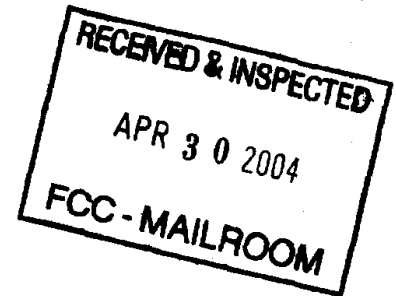


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ORIGINAL



-----Original Message-----

From: bill brooks [mailto:webrooks@earthlink.net]

Sent: Tuesday, April 27, 2004 10:04 AM

To: Michael Powell

Subject: Video Relay Service



April 27, 2004

Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: CG Docket 03-123

Dear Commissioner Copps:

The Oregon Registry of Interpreter for the Deaf (ORID) would like to encourage the FCC to make video relay service a mandatory service as well as change the reimbursement rate to \$14.02 per minute as previously recommended by NECA.

Currently, we do not have many sign language interpreters within our membership who are employed by video relay service providers, but we want to ensure that Deaf consumers have access and that the FCC's rulings do not negatively affect our members or our industry, so our concern is not for personal gain. ORID has more than 120 members and was established in the late 1970's with the goal of promoting excellence within the field of interpreting and the protection of our members.

We have seen first hand how access to VRS can positively impact the lives of Deaf people. Deaf people can now compete for jobs without having to use traditional text relay where a noticeable delay is experienced. Deaf people are also able to communicate in their native language because of the interpreter who is included in the process.

VRS companies need to have sufficient reimbursement for their services in order to pay

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top-notch certified and qualified interpreters appropriately, pursue improvements in technology, receive a reasonable return on their investment and ensure that the interpreters who work with them do not endanger their livelihood by working over the recommended Registry of Interpreter for the Deaf (RID) standard of a 40% occupancy rate.

Please restore the cost categories previously disallowed, raise the reimbursement rate, make VRS a mandatory service and enforce average speed of answer standards. This will make VRS more available to Deaf consumers and functional equivalency will finally be achieved!

Sincerely,

Polly Brooks
ORID President